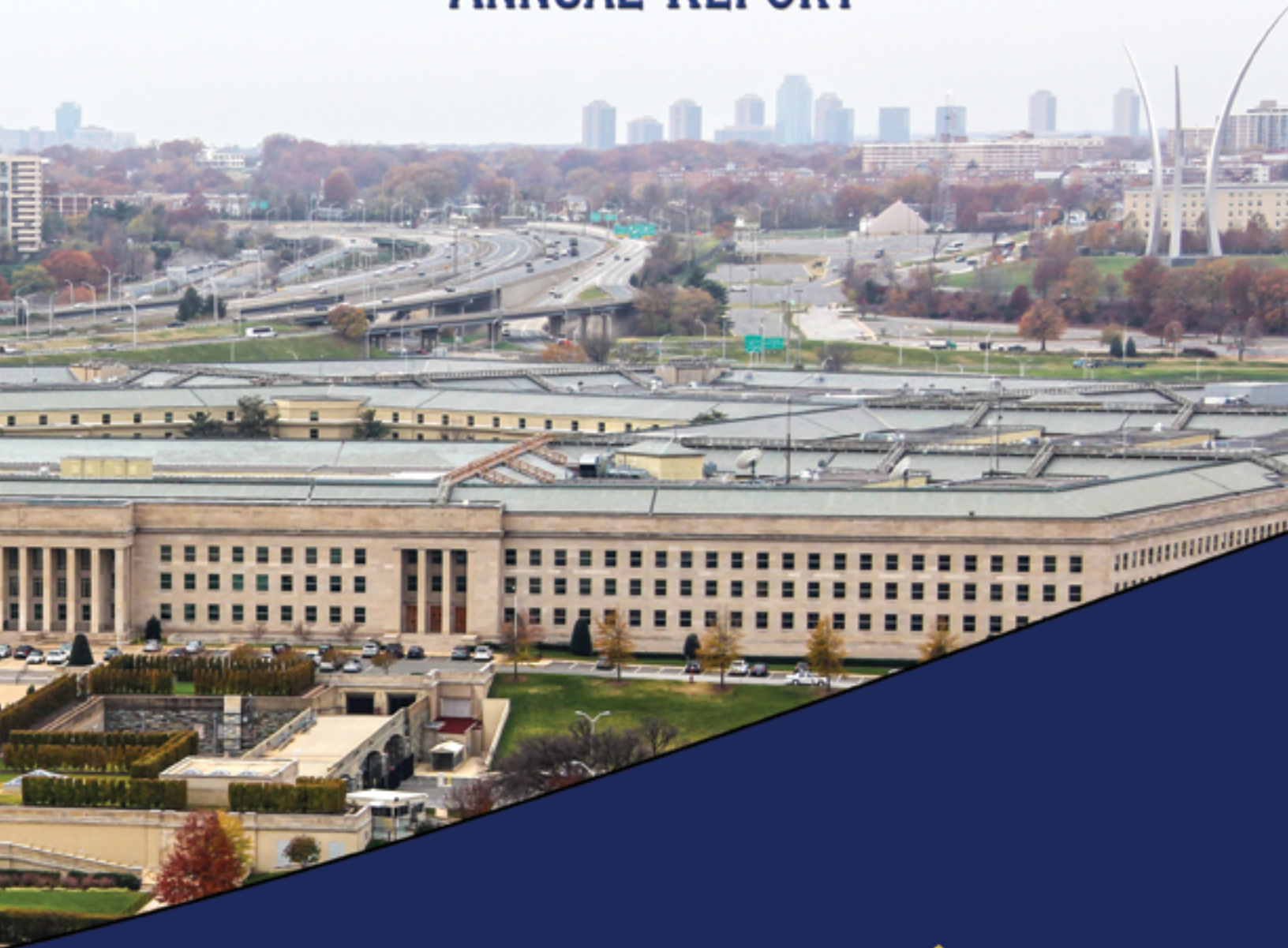


*Department of Defense*



# 2016 DISABILITY ANNUAL REPORT



*DoD Disability Policy and Programs  
Office of Diversity Management and Equal Opportunity  
Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness*







# INTRODUCTION

The Office of Diversity Management and Equal Opportunity (ODMEO) promotes diversity in the Department of Defense (DoD), envisioning a diverse and inclusive mission-ready total force. We seek to foster a DoD culture that competes for the best and brightest talent of our Nation and that ensures the dignity and full participation of individuals with disabilities in the workplace.

## In words of former Secretary of Defense Ashton B. Carter:

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*“In order to advance the spirit of the law and fully embody the values we defend, we must remain steadfast in our commitment to attaining the goal that individuals with targeted disabilities comprise two percent of the Department of Defense workforce. Attaining and ultimately exceeding this goal is a major priority for the Department.”*

—Message from Ash Carter

[Department of Defense 2016 Exemplary Components and Outstanding Civilian Service Members with Disabilities, October 2016]

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ODMEO’s work focuses on three main areas: policy development, guidance, and oversight; program initiatives; and collaboration with DoD Components and outside agencies. This report describes ODMEO’s most significant accomplishments for fiscal year 2016 and our planned projects and activities for 2017.



## POLICY DEVELOPMENT, GUIDANCE, AND OVERSIGHT

ODMEO strategically guides and assists DoD Components in implementing policies that comply with Federal civil rights laws ensuring equal opportunity and prohibiting discrimination. Our reports and analyses keep track of progress and encourage continuous improvement.

### DoD Instruction (DoDI) 1020.dd

ODMEO made significant progress in 2016 in modernizing the DoD issuance on nondiscrimination with DoDI 1020.dd, *“Unlawful Discrimination on the Basis of Disability in Programs or Activities Receiving Federal Financial Assistance From, or Conducted by, the Department of Defense.”* Once finalized, DoDI 1020.dd will replace the existing DoD Disability Non-Discrimination Directive (*DoDD 1020.1*) and the existing regulation published in the Federal Register in 1982.

DoDI 1020.dd will serve as the DoD policy framework to ensure compliance with, and enforcement of, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. The instruction will continue the policy of using the Section 504 complaint resolution process for resolving complaints about accessible information and communication technology submitted under Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.



The new instruction updates the responsibilities of key personnel and of recipients; prohibitions against unlawful discrimination; assurance requirements and compliance information and procedures; complaint resolution and enforcement procedures applicable to recipients; and complaint resolution and enforcement procedures applicable to DoD Components. Throughout the process, the ODMEIO Disability Policy and Programs Team worked with DoD Components, the Department of Justice (*DOJ*), and other stakeholders to ensure concurrence.

This instruction will be the foundation for ODMEIO's disability programs, policies, and activities and will provide the framework for additional guidance to DoD Components. ODMEIO anticipates that the new instruction will be issued in 2017.

### **Defense Disability Program Managers Working Group (DDPMWG)**

The DDPMWG members include DoD Disability Program Managers, Human Resources staff, EEO personnel, Special Emphasis program managers, and other DoD officials. The purpose of the group is to seek DoD input in the development of programs, policies, and activities; to engage in collaborative dialogue to inform leadership through the Defense Disability Working Group; and to advance disability equal opportunity throughout DoD. The DDPMWG meets monthly in-person, and ODMEIO organizes a briefing each year to set priorities and measure progress to support policy development and implementation.

In 2017, the DDPMWG will continue to meet in-person monthly with representatives from each DoD Component, host briefings, and identify topics and policy issues for discussion.

### **Guidance Memoranda**

In 2016, ODMEIO began coordinating guidance memoranda to guide DoD Components on particularly prevalent issues. The guidance memoranda topics include best practices for achieving the goal that two percent of the DoD workforce consist of individuals with targeted disabilities; the use of service and assistance animals; the use of power-driven mobility devices; and accessible information and communication technology.

### **Disability Complaint Management**

ODMEIO provided guidance and technical support to DoD Components in processing complaints under Sections 504 and 508, and cooperated with DOJ, the U.S. Access Board, and DoD Components in facilitating referral and closure of complaints under the Architectural Barriers Act (*ABA*). The ABA requires access to facilities designed, built, or altered with Federal dollars or leased by Federal agencies. The ABA covers a wide range of facilities, including post offices, social security offices, prisons, and national parks. It also applies to non-government facilities that have received Federal funding, such as certain schools, public housing, and mass transit systems.

The complaints process allows ODMEIO to identify emerging disability issues and to work with DoD Components to eliminate systemic barriers. ODMEIO made a concerted effort to improve the timeliness of the complaints process and adopted a strategy to eliminate outstanding cases, reduce backlogs, and close longstanding complaints. Specifically, ODMEIO received 24 new complaints under Sections 504 and 508 in fiscal year 2015, and resolved 7 complaints during the same period.

ODMEIO initiated the following specific strategies related to complaint resolution: using complaints to identify prevalent policy issues; establishing DDPMWG subgroups to draft policy guidance on prevalent policy issues; and instituting monthly conference calls with, and sending letters to, DoD Disability Program Managers to facilitate timely resolution of complaints.



To address the increase in the number of formal and informal complaints received regarding accessible information and communication technology under Section 508, ODMEIO is in the process of drafting a Section 508 complaint investigation template. The template will provide guidance to DoD Components on how to conduct comprehensive Section 508 complaint investigations.

### **Annual Disability Employment Status (DADES) Report**

ODMEIO publishes the Department of Defense Annual Disability Employment Status (DADES) Report in support of the DoD leadership commitment to become a model employer of individuals with disabilities in accordance with Section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and in support of the President's Executive Order 13548, "*Increasing Federal Employment of Individuals with Disabilities*" (July 26, 2010). The DADES Report provides an overview and trend analysis of DoD progress in recruiting, retaining, and advancing individuals with disabilities within the three Military Departments and the Fourth Estate, including individuals with targeted disabilities, veterans, and Service members.

The 2016 DADES report demonstrate[s] that the Department made significant progress in employing individuals with disabilities in 2015. The hiring rate for individuals with targeted disabilities increased from the last fiscal year, but DoD has not yet met the goal that two percent of the DoD workforce consist of individuals with targeted disabilities. While the Defense Finance and Accounting Service was the only DoD Component to meet the two percent participation goal with full-time permanent, non-seasonal employees, DoD as a whole kept its participation steady for the third year in a row at 0.76 percent.

### **Management Directive 715 (MD-715) Analysis**

MD-715 is the policy guidance the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) provides to Federal agencies to use in establishing and maintaining effective programs of equal employment opportunity under several civil rights laws, including Section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. MD-715 establishes standards to ensure that Federal agencies develop and maintain model EEO programs. DoD Components submit annual MD-715 reports to EEOC that include information on disability policy and programs.

ODMEIO reviewed fiscal year 2015 disability-related DoD Component submissions and provided a report that analyzed narrative submissions in relation to DADES disability employment data. ODMEIO identified four priority areas for future special focus: (1) barrier analysis, (2) outreach and recruitment resources, (3) access to information and communication technology, and (4) a comprehensive reasonable accommodation program. ODMEIO discussed the report and special priority areas with the DoD Components at the July 2016 DDPMWG meeting.

In 2017, ODMEIO will produce the first annual *Disability Employment Trends and Analysis (DETA)* report. The report will combine the disability employment data formerly reported in the DADES report, with analysis of DoD Component MD-715 submissions in the four priority areas identified by ODMEIO.

## **PROGRAM INITIATIVES**

ODMEIO's programs focus on successfully attracting, recruiting, developing, and retaining individuals with disabilities in the workforce. The programs seek to enhance and showcase DoD's efforts as a model employer of individuals with disabilities.



### **Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP)**

The Workforce Recruitment Program for College Students and Recent Graduates with Disabilities is a Federal Government-wide recruitment and referral program that integrates students and recent graduates with disabilities into the Federal workforce. ODMEIO manages DoD participation in the WRP, under the purview of the Department of Labor.

DoD Components rely on the WRP as a premiere resource from which to recruit qualified applicants with disabilities, and the WRP serves as a critical component of DoD's strategic imperative to enhance the diversity and inclusion of the DoD workforce.

ODMEIO hosted the 2016 WRP Awards Ceremony on Friday, July 22, 2016, at the United States Access Board in Washington, D.C. The ceremony honored WRP program participants, nominated by their supervisors, for making significant contributions to their assigned work unit. Mr. Christopher P. Lu, Deputy Secretary of Labor, and Mr. Peter K. Levine, Acting Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, provided remarks and presented awards. In 2016, the program introduced an award for a WRP Coordinator who successfully implemented the program and recognized that individual's DoD Component as the WRP Component of the Year.

During 2016, ODMEIO renewed its efforts to increase participation of minority students, recent graduates, and veterans with disabilities in the WRP. Women and traditionally marginalized candidates with disabilities are strongly represented. Veterans' participation in the WRP reached 9.24 percent and made up 16.18 percent of total hires, a two percent increase over 2015.

DoD Components filled more than two hundred temporary and permanent positions with candidates recruited from the 2016 WRP. DoD Components met WRP projected goals, including 2016 projected hires.

ODMEO evaluated its recruitment activities to identify strategies to further improve targeted outreach to veterans, women, and traditionally marginalized populations. These efforts will build a more diverse pipeline of qualified candidates with disabilities, and enhance the overall program value to DoD Components.

The ODMEO Operational Plan for the WRP in 2017 will enhance and strengthen the delivery of the program. In addition to planning and executing the annual WRP Awards Ceremony, ODMEO will update existing WRP policy; revise WRP written standard operating procedures; and align WRP marketing materials and strategies with ODMEO's Strategic Communications Plan. The goals are to increase participant and permanent placement levels by 5 percent above fiscal year 2016; promote efforts to increase permanent hires from WRP using the Schedule A Hiring Authority; and identify strategies to increase participation in the WRP by veterans and minorities.

### **Disability Awards Ceremony**

On October 4, 2016, ODMEO sponsored the 36th Annual Secretary of Defense Disability Awards Ceremony, which is held each October to coincide with National Disability Employment Awareness Month. The Honorable Ashton Carter, the first Secretary of Defense to attend and speak at the ceremony since 1987, hosted the event.

The Secretary of Defense Disability Awards are presented to Service members and civilian employees with disabilities for their outstanding contributions in supporting the DoD mission, and to the DoD Components for their exemplary efforts to adopt and implement practices that advance a diverse and inclusive workforce.

Five Department of Defense Components are honored for their exemplary practices in employing individuals with disabilities. Four of these five awards recognize achievements in programs and practices promoting the hiring, retention, and advancement of individuals with disabilities. In 2016, ODMEO introduced a new award honoring a DoD Component for achievements in ensuring accessible information and communication technology in the workplace.

The program culminated a yearlong effort of proactively planning and implementing disability affirmative employment programs, policies, and practices. The ceremony supports ODMEO's efforts to reduce attitudinal barriers to the employment of individuals with disabilities, and recognizes the achievements of DoD service members and civilians with disabilities.

Activities planned for 2017 include strengthening and enhancing the awards ceremony, and other outreach activities, to showcase DoD and ODMEO achievements. ODMEO will continue to host the awards ceremony as an ongoing program to highlight exemplary DoD Components and outstanding Service members and civilians with disabilities for the entire year.

### **Mentoring Programs**

ODMEO assisted DoD Components in developing mentoring initiatives across DoD. Mentoring programs match volunteer mentors with program participants and offer opportunities for career and professional development, including the possibility for long-term professional development.

In 2016, ODMEO completed a comprehensive redesign of the mentoring pilot project curriculum with the Army to focus on retaining Schedule A hires, which allows the option for replication throughout DoD Components. ODMEO also sponsored the WRP Mentoring Exchange to match WRP participants with DoD professionals.

In 2017, ODMEO will continue to provide support and subject matter expertise to the Army in its efforts to implement the mentoring pilot. The ODMEO Disability Team is working to develop curriculum that can be used in mentoring initiatives across DoD.



## COLLABORATION

In collaboration with DoD Components, ODMEO works to eliminate technological, architectural, programmatic, and other barriers to ensure the full participation of individuals with disabilities, including veterans and Service members, in DoD programs and services. ODMEO also provides ongoing guidance, expertise, and support to outside agencies to promote accessibility.

### **Washington Headquarters Service Accessibility Task Force (*WHS ATF*)**

WHS ATF identifies and explores issues of access on WHS-owned properties in the National Capital Region. Mr. Clarence Johnson, Director, ODMEO, is co-chair of the WHS ATF.

The task force meets quarterly and brings stakeholders from different departments together to discuss and collaborate on solutions to accessibility issues. The ATF Working Group, a subset of the task force, is an action team of facilities personnel who directly receive and resolve accessibility issues within the properties. ODMEO participates in the ATF quarterly meetings, as well as the working group meetings, to provide a voice for individuals with disabilities and address/resolve accessibility issues by engaging with management.

In July 2016, ODMEO partnered with WHS ATF in coordinating and developing a table event for outreach, where WHS ATF distributed information on many resources, including ODMEO. In August 2016, the Deputy



Director of ODMEEO was a keynote speaker, and the ODMEEO Director of Disability Programs was a panelist, at the WHS ATF Town Hall, which provided an opportunity for employees at the Mark Center and the Pentagon to discuss accessibility concerns.

In 2017, ODMEEO will engage in strategic planning in collaboration with the WHS ATF through agenda setting, monitoring, and resolution efforts to ensure accessibility.

### **Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI)**

Under the supervision of ODMEEO, DEOMI offers equal opportunity and equal employment opportunity education and training for military personnel and civilians. Their mission is to deliver education, training, research, and innovative solutions to enhance total force readiness. ODMEEO participates in and provides feedback regarding these training programs and performs site visits to evaluate DEOMI's Disability Program Management Course (DPMC).

ODMEEO will collaborate with DEOMI in 2017 to develop and deliver a quarterly course for disability program managers and other key stakeholders; to ensure course materials are current and consistent with laws, regulations, and policies; and to support the DEOMI Civilian EEO training transformation.

### **U.S. Access Board**

The U.S. Access Board is an independent Federal agency that promotes equality for people with disabilities through leadership in accessible design and the development of accessibility guidelines and standards for the building environment, transportation, communication, medical diagnostic equipment, and information technology.

The Access Board functions as a coordinating body among Federal agencies and directly represents the public, particularly people with disabilities. Twelve members of the governing Board represent most of the Federal departments. DoD is a statutory member of the Access Board, and the Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness is the DoD statutory representative of the Access Board.

In 2016, the ODMEEO Director served as the DoD staff liaison to the Access Board, and the Director of Disability Programs attended bi-monthly board meetings. The relationship with board members supported the overall partnership between ODMEEO and the Access Board, strengthening the ongoing interagency collaboration.









*Organized by:*

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